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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL REMARKS
Christmas Meditation ..... H. Myron Bromley 208

ARTICLES
The Roman Catholic, Communist, and Protestant Approach to Social Structure .... Eugene A. Nida 209
The Problem of Formalism and Missions ....Dean Fredrickson 220
The Hill Peoples of Kengtung State .... Elaine T. Lewis 224
The Missionary and Culture Change .... William A. Smalley 231

CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURES
The Missionary and the Evaluation of Culture .... William D. Reyburn 238

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS
Should the Missionary Observe Local Taboos? .... Beulah and Richard Johnston 245

NOTES AND NEWS
Institute of Missions Inaugurated .... James O. Buswell, III 248

INDEX FOR VOLUME IV 250

EDITORIAL REMARKS

Christmas Meditation

'Twas a week before Christmas when I returned here. The days scarcely seemed festive; battle, feud and disease took a grim record toll the last two weeks of the year. Three men whom I had tried to treat died--two from what appeared to be scrub typhus, one from the spear of my friend and first informant, Yameke, after I had foolishly extracted a five-inch piece broken off in the victim's back. Yet Satan's strategy is not simplex. While objective, spear-hurling battle lit funeral pyres on the surrounding hills, a subtle, but as deadly, conflict rose within. It was in this context that the Incarnation fact came with persuasive pertinence. Our traditions enshrine the pastoral facets of the Bethlehem story, but the Bible recalls that Christ came in an age of hate, resentment, bloodshed--the cruel reign of Herod. If tensions of man's culture were not strange to Him, neither were the inner facts of man's self; as Phillips translates Paul: "God has met this by sending His own Son Jesus Christ to live in that human nature which causes trouble." As we shared with our friends the message of His coming, we were freshly aware that only this offered meaning and promise in the bitter, frustrating matrix of sinful culture and sinful nature.

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THE ROMAN CATHOLIC, COMMUNIST, AND PROTESTANT APPROACH TO SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Eugene A. Nida

Even the most casual observer of what is going on in the world today recognizes that there is something essentially different in the approach which Roman Catholicism, Communism, and Protestantism make to social structure. In country after country, one finds the Roman Catholic hierarchy concentrating on the elite, drawing its principal leadership from this class, and seeing that important members of the class feel no lack of education or spiritual assistance. At the same time, Roman Catholicism has a wide appeal to the impoverished masses, while among the middle classes there is often a strong anticlerical sentiment.

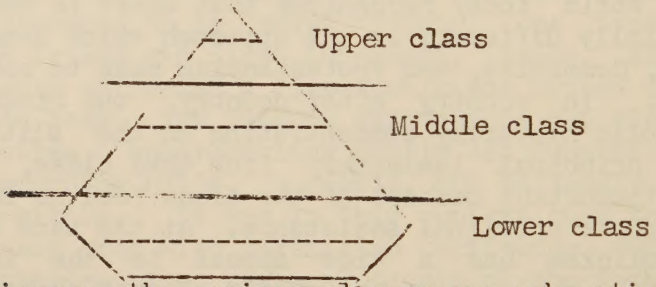
On the other hand, Communism talks of a classless society and yet has succeeded in creating the most class-conscious structure known in the Western world (almost equivalent to the caste system of India). The Communist leadership itself constitutes a special elite, which is drawn principally from the proletariat--a dictatorship by representatives of the proletariat.

Protestants, however, have their strength not in the elite classes nor in the lower classes, but primarily in the middle classes, and especially in those segments which are on the upward move in the socio-economic scale.

Do these differences in Roman Catholic, Communist, and Protestant "societies" reflect simply an accidental development? Or are they the result of well-thought-out plans of social organization? Or are such developments an inevitable reflection of other fundamental features of these rather diverse ideologies? The answers to these questions can only be found in an analysis of the structure of society and certain significant features of social control and movement.

Diagrammatic Representation of Social Structure

As a means of visualizing something of the nature of social structure (though with obvious oversimplification and hence skewing of the data), we may diagram a typical social structure as follows:[1]

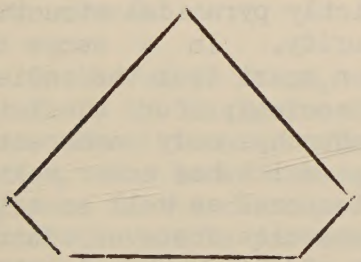


In this diagram the various classes are schematically arranged as higher, middle, and lower, with a subdivisional distinction within each class, thus giving us a traditional six-class structure (which may or may not be true of particular societies, but which is typical of a number of societies). Rather than being a strict pyramid (as is usually taught by Communist propaganda), most structures tend to be a kind of inverted diamond, since the indigent population is actually less numerous in most societies than other segments of the lower class, such as factory laborers, unskilled day laborers, and tenant farmers. The middle class is generally divided between the independent tradesmen and small merchants in the lower middle class and the semiprofessional persons, clerks and lower-bracket white collar workers in the upper middle class. The upper class is divided usually between the "older families," constituting the first-class elite, and many of the leaders in business and the professional world. However, in many instances some members of the "old families aristocracy" are not as wealthy or as politically influential as many members of the second-class elite (or the lower upper class).

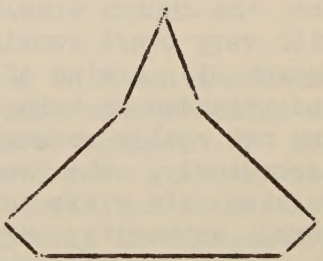
Class structure is not to be considered simply a classification of earning power or occupation. It in-

volves such additional factors as family lineage, education, personal attractiveness, basic attitudes (such as attitudes toward the chances of success, value of hard work, saving of money, desirability of education, and sex mores), personal talents (as in the field of music, art, entertainment), and friendships. Furthermore, class structure is not something which the anthropologist or sociologist decides to "impose" on the society in order to describe it. The social structure is there and recognized in covert or overt forms by the people. Although in some societies many persons tend to deny its existence (something which is true of a number of communities in the United States), the behavior of people within such societies reveals a set of human relationships which are based upon such class structuring.

Because of the wide differences in types of social structures, it would scarcely be fair not to emphasize such diversities by comparing certain widely varying structures. For this we may take the following diagrams, based on a more or less impressionistic view of the structures of the USA and of India:



USA



India

It must be emphasized again that these diagrams are strictly impressionistic, but such a procedure could be developed rigorously and provide a means of type-analysis for classifying social structures. Statistics which are not available for large societies are based primarily on purely "mechanical features," such as income, occupation, or caste, and these factors alone do not tell the whole story. It is hoped, however, that

the typology of social structures may be worked out more satisfactorily for larger societies.

The Roman Catholic Approach to Social Structure

Without exception, the Roman Catholic approach to the social structure is through the elite, who are provided with good schools, considerable personal attention, and from which group the leadership of the church comes. There are, of course, many priests drawn from the lower classes, but with very rare exceptions any member of the priesthood having a rank of bishop or higher is drawn from the elite, and, if possible, from the first-class elite--the aristocracy. Moreover, the church exerts its control on the society by means of the elite, who generally dominate the political and economic life of the people. This means that the Roman Catholic clergy are almost without exception on the side of the conservative political party.

It is quite understandable that the Roman Catholic Church should approach the social structure in this way, for the church itself is a strictly pyramidal structure with very overt ranking of authority. In a sense the church is a kind of institution apart from the society and regarded as being above the society, for the laity are not really members of the church, only adherents. Accordingly, the Roman church, which has never relinquished its claim to complete temporal as well as spiritual authority, proceeds to exercise whatever control it can by means of the same type of hierarchical attitude toward the social structure as is contained within its own organization.

Historically the Roman Catholic Church is the carry-over of the authoritarian structure of ancient Roman society, and its present structure was more or less "frozen" during the Renaissance, when society was completely controlled by the first-class elite. There have been some notable attempts to introduce certain changes in such structuring, and in a sense the equalitarian char-

acter of certain of the Catholic orders (not, of course, the Jesuits) fulfills this function, but these orders have not gained control of the papacy. Most recently there was a very significant attempt to bring the church closer to the people by instituting the role of "worker-priests" in France. However, the authorities of the church abandoned this scheme entirely when they discovered that the priests were themselves becoming "too sympathetic" with the workers. Had such a movement continued, it would have undermined the authoritarian structure, based upon a definite class consciousness, which identified itself with the elite, not with the workers.

In the almost exclusive identification of the Roman church with the position and interests of the elite there lie the seeds of greatly diminished power and influence, for the future is with the masses. The general repudiation of the Roman church by the masses in Europe, the rise of strong anticlerical movements, especially among the middle classes, and the indifference of the average man to the doctrines of the church, in favor of the new cult of "scientism," poses a real threat to the Roman church.

On the other hand, in countries in which the Roman church is the exclusive dictator of the school system or where the elite have almost complete control of the masses, the lower classes continue to have a strong allegiance to the church. In the elaborate and attractive ritual the people participate vicariously in a pageantry provided by the elite and characteristic of their opulence. The church provides the only evident hope of any changed status in the next life. Furthermore, the dependency relation to the church in spiritual matters is only a symbolic continuation of economic and social dependency upon the elite. In these circumstances, however, the middle classes are often anticlerical, for they recognize in the Roman church their principal obstacle to breaking into the elite position. Accordingly, politicians, who arise primarily from the upward-moving segments of the middle class, cultivate the masses by means

of liberal political doctrines and thus lay the groundwork for taking over governments from the conservatives. When, however, as has happened several times in Latin America, the amoral attitudes of certain liberal leaders (as reflected in their evident concern for purely personal gain) leave the masses disillusioned, they are then amenable to overtures from the conservatives, who promise law and order, even at the expense of freedom.

The Communist Approach to Social Structure

The Communists are authoritarian and totalitarian, even as the Roman Catholics are, but their approach to social structure is very different, even though in the end they create a strictly pyramidal structure with highly centralized controls. However, there are some very important differences. In the first place, the first- and second-class elite (the upper class) must be liquidated by killing (in which case the property may be expropriated) or brainwashing. The first process is employed primarily with the rich, and the second is used on intellectual groups. Once these two classes of elite have been eliminated, the party can superimpose upon the society a new ruling clique, a new elite. This new elite, however, is not drawn from members of the former elite, except in rare instances. It is drawn, rather, from members of the lower class or from certain disillusioned persons of the middle class (especially members of rejected minority groups) who have tried to break through into the upper class but have been prevented from doing so, despite their evident personal capacities. This is a reason why in a number of countries of western Europe and the United States there are such a high percentage of Jews in the Communist movement, and why in the United States Communism has had such a wide appeal to certain intellectuals in the Negro population.

The purposeful and planned discrimination against representatives of the upper middle classes or former upper classes is evident in eastern Germany, where the sons of professors are often rejected for advanced stud-

ies, despite their high qualifications, in favor of the sons of tradesmen or day laborers who may actually be somewhat inferior in intellectual ability. By plucking a person out of a lower class and thrusting him into the elite in such a way that the person is completely dependent upon party loyalty for every advance in status or advantage in living, the Communist leadership know full well that they can produce a much more loyal servant of the state. Furthermore, such a person is not so likely to want to push into the first-class elite, but will be more content with second-class elite status. In addition to this, his viewpoints are likely to be more amoral with regard to party loyalty than if he felt that he had a right to certain prerogatives. Furthermore, as a "representative" of the lower classes he can more satisfactorily live the fiction of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

The Communist emphasis upon creating a big social gap between the elite leadership and the rest of the populace helps to provide a distance which can better justify the doctrine of "infallibility," which the Communists have been entirely too clever to formulate as a creed (in contrast with the Roman Catholics), but which constitutes an implicit doctrine. This is evidenced in the fact that the people are never provided with more than one slate of officials to approve. In other words, the State knows best, in the finest paternalistic and Tsarist fashion. By providing a large gap between the governing elite and the masses the party is able to place a higher "price tag" on membership (the price of unquestioned loyalty), and not only will men do anything to get in, but they will perform any type of function in order to stay in.

On the other hand, the social structure of Communism contains the seeds of crisis, for what is to happen with the second and third generation of Communists? Human nature being what it is, is there a possibility that the elite class will not want to perpetuate itself as an aristocracy, in which case the Soviet social structure

will then be frozen into a kind of caste system. Even at present the Soviet system is not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but a dictatorship of men of whom the majority arose out of the proletariat. But there is every likelihood that within two or three generations there will be a dictatorship of an aristocracy, which in times past arose out of the proletariat, and there will be only a propagandistic touch with the masses. There is no doubt but what such a fiction may be maintained for some time, especially in an age where controls of power and communication can be so centralized. However, the dictatorship of the proletariat will only be a fiction, even as "the classless society" is also a fiction.

The Protestant Approach to Social Structure

On the whole, the Protestants have not purposely avoided any class, but have infiltrated all classes, as reflected in churches which range from Episcopal to Pentecostal. It is quite true that during the Reformation the decisions of princes were of great importance in the political struggle, but the real strength of the Protestant movement existed in the rapidly growing merchant classes, not primarily among the ruling classes. It can still be said that the major strength of Protestantism exists in the lower middle and upper lower classes.

By concentration of doctrines involving personal salvation, moral integrity, thrift, financial responsibility, hard work, and the elimination of personal vices, Protestantism has not only attracted people who are interested in personal improvement, but has started many people on the upward "climb" in the social structure, since precisely these virtues are important in the individualistic, profit-motive society of the West. The Methodist movement in England, for example, began primarily among the lower classes, but within a short time the descendants of these people were predominantly middle-class people, and now there is a sizable group of British Methodists who are members of the lower upper class.

In this upward movement of Protestant groups there has always been the tendency of the group to lose effective contact with the class out of which it has come. Accordingly, Methodism, which "outgrew" its appeal to the lower classes, indirectly fostered a Nazarene revival, and the Nazarenes and similar groups, who tended to move away from the lower classes, made room for Pentecostals, whose principal appeal is directed primarily to such classes.

Protestantism does not have a particularly strong appeal to the very wealthy, for in general it demands too high a standard of stewardship of money and too great a sense of responsibility for social ills. Furthermore, since salvation cannot be purchased by money, there is no guarantee of special favors for the rich. (There are, of course, some unfortunate exceptions in which Protestantism falls far short of its historical and Biblical basis.)

Protestantism is far more racially prejudiced and class conscious than Roman Catholicism. The principal reason for this is the fact that in Protestantism the laity are "members" of the church (not just "adherents," in contrast with the ordained who alone constitute the "church," as far as Roman Catholicism is concerned) and hence they have a greater sense of congregational participation and oneness. This type of in-group consciousness leads to greater class awareness and the tendency to segregation, following the patterns of the social structure.

On the whole, the Roman Catholic Church has a greater appeal than does the Protestant to the very poor. It is less bothered by problems of class consciousness and prejudice, which arise from the congregational character of the Protestant movement. It also provides elaborate, beautiful ritual in which the poor may participate and thus identify themselves with something immeasurably higher than their own humble status. The poor remain attached to the church in the same dependent relation-

ship which they have toward the elite on whom they are socially and economically dependent, and the church may provide a sense of status and well-being, even in the worst of circumstances, for it is the one claim which such persons have for "pie in the sky by and by." Furthermore, in order to attain these ultimate goals the Roman church does not make the same demands upon the lower classes for personal initiative, responsibility, and ambition--factors which are noticeably lacking in members of this class.

The ideal Protestant approach to society is the incarnational one, in which those of any one class are willing to reach down and, in identification with those who have not found the way, introduce them to "the Way the Truth and the Life" in Christ Jesus. This is the way of the kenosis (the "emptying") of prerogatives in order that men beneath may be reached and raised up. However, except for the foreign mission enterprise, it is not usually the case that members of a church have such a ministry of reaching down as Christ did, but they reach out to those of the same social class. In fact, those who reach down (who dare to preach in the streets and without official sanction, as Wesley did), are often ostracized from the original constituency and excluded. They accordingly form a new denomination, with a distinctive message for and appeal to a particular social segment. Since Protestantism not only directly and indirectly fosters such movements, but refuses to censure such departures as heresies (as is the case with parallel departures from Roman Catholicism), it is inevitable that Protestantism will continue to produce a series of different denominations. Actually, however, this capacity to reach new and different segments within the social structure and to bring into leadership (often quite unintentionally) persons of ability within the diverse social groupings is the genius of Protestantism. If, on the other hand, in pursuance of the ideal of a united Protestantism this belief in the priesthood of the believer is denied to the point of crushing such new and creative movements (a kind of totalitarian ecumenicity),

Protestantism will have sown the seeds of its own destruction. It could only be successful in such a pursuit of conformity by becoming a completely totalitarian organization. However, those whose ecumenical thinking is most realistic within the Protestant movement recognize that the high-priestly prayer of our Lord (John 17) does not mean organizational identity as much as spiritual unity. In the age of the mass man one must not be deceived into thinking that only in organizational identity is there strength, for masked beneath an outward unity may be smoldering antagonisms, while within a group of freely co-operating entities there may be the greatest capacity for the fullest expression of latent human creativity.

Footnote

1. See Eugene A. Nida, "The Role of Language in Contemporary Africa," Practical Anthropology, Vol. 4, No. 4 (July-August, 1957), p. 136.

THE PROBLEM OF FORMALISM AND MISSIONS

Dean Fredrickson

History cannot confirm or define Christianity, but we can gather from the observation of past events that outward expressions of inward obedience to God have no value if the inward, seeking, obedient spirit has departed. There is no standard of theological externals, form of meeting, or cultural morality that necessarily defines spiritual life. A Christian's practice must be the expression of an inward relation to God. A religious group, the church, is as spiritual as the obedience of the individual members adds up to corporate obedience in group matters. Because it is the traditional thing to sing hymns at the beginning of meetings has absolutely no significance other than that hymnsinging at the beginning of meetings is the traditional thing.

Social Pressures

For the missionary-teacher this has great meaning, for it is much easier to teach the disciple-student to copy. In every culture what others do and what others think should be done determines for every individual whether he should wear a sport coat or a bark apron, whether he should aim to be the president of his country or the best hunter in the tribe. The dialect of speech, the manner of repartee, and the basic concepts and value scale are all a result of the response of the individual to the pressures which those around him unconsciously manufacture.[1] It is therefore easier for the missionary-teacher to set in motion the forces of a group feeling than to cause one lone individual to seek in Spirit-enlightened Bible study (with the missionary as teacher) to think, to act for himself.

Therefore the missionary-teacher may have to guard against the first solidifications of form. Each of the disciple-students must learn obedience for himself at the feet of Christ. Christianity is not sold by means

of a sales talk on the blessings accruing to those who buy. Christianity is entered into only as a man renounces himself to follow Jesus Christ. Always and in every action the matter of the student's relationship to God's authority in the Bible is the absolute criterion. If by the skilled use of natural group pressures the missionary-teacher obtains conformity from the disciple-student, the missionary-teacher is guilty of substituting an arbitrary law of a religious culture for the law of God, and thus he has replaced God with an idol.

If the disciple-student obeys the missionary-teacher because the teacher knows best ("He's been to school and I haven't..."), the teacher has supplanted God in the life of the student. If the student simply watches everyone in the church group doing a certain thing with pleasure and success, and decides that he, too, should therefore be doing the same, the church culture occupies the place of God (again, Acts 8:9-24). Producing a disciple receptive to the missionary or to the current culture of the church or to another influence as different from a disciple obedient to God (as His will is in the Bible) is exactly the difference between producing a religious pagan and a Christian. That two people are doing the same thing does not imply, of course, that one is in the rut of formalism, but the missionary-teacher's great concern is to stimulate individual thought and action and personal devotion to God in the disciple-students. Unless missionary endeavor produces this individual appeal and obedience to the Word of God, it produces professing church members who differ from Romanists only in name.

Formal Taboos of Fundamentalism

In the United States the externals of cultural morality are clearly defined among fundamentalists: "When you are saved you should quit smoking, drinking, dancing, going to the movies, and playing cards." And this is not all. According to the local situation, the taboos vary from mixed bathing and the wearing of lipstick

to associating with theological liberals and the "misplacement" of the rapture. Among other groups they may not be as well-codified and as numerous, but they are there.

Now, the interesting thing about these various local consciences is that they are always an external standard. There is no ethical-moral content to any one of the things mentioned above unless they are referred to the Biblical principles of temperance, respect and right use of God's creation, modesty, and so forth. But a principle cannot ever be the standard for group behavior, for a principle will never apply exactly the same to the lives of differing individuals. It is here that becoming and being a Christian has become so much easier than it really is. It is admitted that it is much harder to regulate things when it is the individual who must decide his own behavior; and it is much harder to go about the usual pastime of comparison, the end of which is a relative righteousness. But when an external group standard becomes the law to which a man must appeal, it cannot be the Bible and God which he obeys, for the Bible can be understood only in terms of principle, which applies in various ways to the lives of different men, and which the individual must appropriate to his own life, being content with obedience rather than approval from his group. An external standard can never change the interior of a man, but an external standard can deceive a man into thinking he is obeying God.

Equally important, however, is the fact that no change of individual relationship to God can occur without a corresponding change in the outward thing in question. This is to say that by the setting up and teaching of a pattern of externalities we defeat our purpose, for real obedience to Jesus Christ through the Bible is nearly impossible to teach where cultural conclusions are already forced upon the student in such a way as to imply that he is hardly a Christian if he does not fulfill the standard of the group. Let it not be supposed, however, that this implies that obedience is so inward

and spiritual a matter as to exist only in a state of mind or in theory; obedience to God is active response with respect to the situations in the life of a man. It is he himself, however, not his religious culture, who must in private prayer and personal Bible study decide both what the principle is and how he must obey it. In the group life of the local church, it is the elders, who are privately praying and personally studying the Bible, who must make, in the milieu of their culture, the decisions in view of Biblical principle.

Footnotes

1. The relationship of these culture pressures and missionary work are presented from one point of view by D. A. McGavran in The Bridges of God.

THE HILL PEOPLES OF KENGTUNG STATE[1]

Elaine T. Lewis

Perhaps there is no other area in all of Burma where there are as many different ethnic groups as in the rugged mountains of Kengtung State. The difficulty of communication from one area to another, and sometimes even from one village to its neighboring villages, has made for relatively closed villages and cultural groups. Even in this modern day there are only two major roads in the state (which is about the size of Massachusetts and Connecticut combined)--the road from Takaw (the Salween River) to Kengtung, and the road from Kengtung to Thailand. There are two or three other short fair-weather roads that can be used about four months of the year.

The international and interracial character of Kengtung State makes it an intensely interesting place in which to live. Being bordered by China on the north, Laos on the east, and Thailand on the south, with the great Salween River forming a formidable barrier from the rest of Burma to the west, Kengtung is one of the important crossroads of Southeast Asia. The majority of the indigenous people of the state are of ancestry that originated in China and for many generations have migrated southwards. That migration has not stopped, but is moving sluggishly in quiet, peaceful times. It becomes a raging torrent in times of unrest. For instance, at the time the Chinese Communists occupied Yunnan Province to the border of Kengtung State in 1950, a great flood of hill people came down into Kengtung State. Some of them established new little villages of their own, and others have gradually been absorbed into already existing villages. For a while the process of migration again slowed up, but now whenever the people feel the pressure of Communist rule, the pace of migration quickens once more.

This migration southward does not stop at the southern border of Kengtung State. Many hill people from the

area have found their way into the hills of Thailand, so that now one may find substantial numbers of Lahus, Akhas, Meau, Was, and other hill tribes originally from Kengtung in the hills of northern Thailand.

Agriculture and Population Movements.

Except for times of political upheaval as mentioned above, the main reason for migration is economic. Using the slash-and-burn method of hill cultivation, the people run out of arable soil after a village has been established for a few years in a given area, so they are forced to move to virgin forests where they will find some fertility in the soil. Thus, they leave vast wastelands behind and move in to make new wastelands of richly forested areas to the south.

In the past few years, perhaps more than at any other time in the history of these hill races, there has begun to be an awakening to the fact that this endless burning of the jungle, the constant migration southward, and the leaving behind of barren wastelands cannot go on forever. This awakening is coming about partly through education, as the literate Christians have been approached through books, magazines, and word of mouth to show them the need of finding more satisfactory methods of agriculture. The method to which they are turning is that of the irrigated rice fields in the narrow valleys and lowlands. Another element that has helped tremendously in making it possible for the people to work the lowland fields has been the introduction of effective antimalaria drugs. In the past, the hill people were so severely affected by the malaria parasite that they could not live and work anywhere but high in the hills above the malaria areas.

Economically, most of the hill people scarcely do more than hold their own. Large numbers of them do not raise enough paddy to feed their own families from harvest to harvest. Most of those who use only the slash-and-burn method of agriculture have to hire out as

coolies or in some other way earn enough money to buy rice for their families when their own supply runs out. However, it is interesting to note that the majority of the irrigated-field cultivators are able to raise enough food for their families, and many have a surplus to sell.

Following World War II nearly all of the hill villages were in economic disaster. There was practically no livestock, as the enemy soldiers had taken almost everything they had. Since the war the people have been struggling to rebuild their herds and flocks, but although there has been general improvement, prewar prosperity has still not been reached. For many years there have been large numbers of Chinese Nationalist troops in the area demanding food and money from the people. The areas in which these troops operate are getting poorer and poorer, and some villages are finding it necessary to flee. There are also increasing numbers of robber bands that make frequent raids on villages and travelers.

Language Problems

Working with the hill people of Kengtung State is a most bewildering task. How can one develop a program that will reach people of so many varying cultures and languages? Besides the various types of Shans and Chinese that inhabit the valleys in large numbers, there are numerous hill tribes living in villages of from 3 or 4 to perhaps 100 houses. Some of these tribes, like the Lahu and Akha, are quite large, composed of tens of thousands of people. Other tribes, however, are very tiny--at least the segment of the tribe living in this state--and perhaps occupy only 2 or 3 small villages. Some of the hill tribes that we know of in Kengtung State are Lahu, Akha, Lisu, Tai Loi, Wa, Palaung, Ahkui, Kachin, Meau, Shan Tao, and Ehn. We do not consider this list to be complete, because every little while we hear of a new tribe. (We are not considering the Shans as a hill tribe, and therefore they, as well as the many

Chinese in the area, do not come within the scope of this paper.)

All of these tribes are again divided into several subtribes, each with its own dialect. Many of these subtribes are culturally quite different from one another, and their languages are mutually unintelligible. To illustrate this: Recently some Tai Loi men of the Meung Yawng area came to visit a Tai Loi home in a village near Pangwai. When they were asked whether they could understand each other they replied, "No, we don't even try to speak Tai Loi to each other, but we converse in Shan." Shan is the trade language of the area. However, although many of the men know Shan well enough to buy and sell and carry on daily contacts through that medium, it will always remain a foreign language to them. Most of the women and children do not know it at all. The Gospel message must be presented to the people in their own tongue, or else it will always seem foreign and distant to them.

Opium, a Curse

One of the greatest curses of the people of Kengtung State is opium. There are no legal restrictions on the growth and use of opium, and it is becoming the cruel taskmaster of more and more people all the time. There are those clever enough to grow opium and get "rich" selling it, at the same time refraining from the use of it themselves. Most people, however, do not have that much self-control, and an alarming number of men in the area are opium addicts.

This problem is especially acute among the Akhas. The majority of the Akha men begin smoking opium soon after they are married. The young men usually do not acquire the habit before marriage, because many of the girls frown on the habit. However, despite promises to their brides that they will never touch opium, most of them are drawn into the net before many years. This means that the men soon become debilitated and the women are forced to take over most of the work in the fields,

as well as the work of caring for the livestock, spinning cotton, weaving, and the other multitudinous women's tasks. An increasing number of Akha women, too, are taking up the opium habit, perhaps as an escape from the conditions imposed upon them by their addicted husbands.

Although the opium habit is probably the most acute among the Akhas and threatens to lead the whole tribe into the depths of degradation, it is also a very real menace to the other tribes as well. An increasing number of Lahus are taking up opium cultivation, and poppy fields are to be found in abundance all over the state.

We are most grateful that the Christian community in Kengtung State is almost wholly free of this curse. The church has taken a strong stand against opium--both the personal use of it and traffic in it. In fact, it would seem that the church is the only strong bulwark to stem the tide of this vicious social evil at the present time. The church must meet the challenge of claiming the people of this state for Christ before opium, gambling, and other vices bring complete moral disaster.

Religion

We smile when we hear such statements as, "Animistic peoples are easy to win to Christianity because they have no organized religion to hold them," or "The religion of animistic peoples is very simple." These statements have not been found to be true of the Lahu and Akha cultures, with which we have been most intimately associated for 9-1/2 years. The Akha culture especially is highly complicated, and is so deeply ingrained into every fiber of their beings that it is a cataclysmic experience for them to break away and accept a new way of life.

That leads to another oft-quoted statement: "Christianity is not a religion, but a way of life." We are inclined to believe that every religion is a "way of life" (speaking now only of the earthly life), and that

is certainly true of the religion of animistic peoples. Indeed, Christians are likely to make more definite divisions between the "secular" and the "sacred" than animistic peoples are. It has been our experience that to animistic peoples all of life is religion, and all of religion is life. There is no separation of the two. Every season of the year is greeted with religious festivals. Every activity of their lives is presented to the spirits for blessing. What they eat and drink, what they say and do, what they believe and practice--all are determined by the vast network of beliefs, customs, and rites that have been accumulated from generation to generation for many centuries.

Receptivity to the Gospel

For some reason which we do not fully understand, the religion of the Lahus presents fewer serious obstacles to the Gospel than that of the Akhas. Perhaps the main reason is that the moral code and folklore of the Lahu people are more in harmony with Christian teaching than those of the Akhas. But the religion of the Akhas has stood as a formidable barrier to the Christian witness among that race. Perhaps it is because it is more highly developed. Also, its inclusion of ancestor-worship as a very important part of its ritual causes it to be more deeply rooted than some other animistic cultures. Their moral code and folklore have little if any resemblance to Christianity.

The resistance to Christianity in this generation among the Akhas, however, is breaking down considerably. The reasons for this seem to be: (1) Few men of the younger generation are learning to do the work of priests and shamans, without whom their rituals cannot be practiced. (2) As Akhas observe Christian young people of other tribes becoming educated and taking their places as leaders in their communities, they too want their children to be educated. As the only teachers available are Christians, some are becoming willing to have Christian teachers go into their villages to open schools. This does not necessarily mean that they are

receptive to the Gospel, but they do not usually prevent the Christian teachers from witnessing and holding services. (3) There are no doubt some Akhas who are sincerely anxious to break away from the bondage of their highly demanding religion and accept the freedom that is found in Christ. As they hear the Gospel of love and grace, some recognize how vastly superior it is to the life offered to them by their tribal religion.

Although, as has been pointed out, the new friendliness of the Akhas to the Gospel is not usually on the spiritual level that we could hope for, nevertheless, the door is being opened to Christian witness, and the church needs to enter and to occupy.

The great majority of the Christians in Kengtung State are Lahus. Yet, there are still large numbers of non-Christian Lahus, and some rather large areas of Lahu villages are completely unevangelized. There are several Lahu "prophets" in various areas of the state who are leading vigorous movements, forming serious resistance to the Gospel witness. However, there seems to be a readiness on the part of many of the non-Christian Lahus, and they are showing increased friendliness to the Christian witness.

The minor hill tribes mentioned above are predominantly non-Christian. There are several in which, to our knowledge, there is not a single convert in this area. They include the Lisus, Palaungs, Ahkui, Meau, Shan Tao, and Ehn. Most of these people are animists, but there are a few Buddhists among them as well.

Note

1. Reprinted from The Burma News.

THE MISSIONARY AND CULTURE CHANGE

William A. Smalley

That the missionary has historically been an agent of culture change in non-Western societies no informed, thinking person would deny. That role of creating culture change has often been seriously misunderstood, however, in different ways by the missionary himself, his supporters, and his critics. The basic attitude of the missionary on this matter, and fundamental missionary policy in an area with respect to it, will inevitably influence profoundly the communication of the Gospel and the possible development of an "indigenous" expression of Christianity.[1]

Some critics of the missionary enterprise have grossly exaggerated the missionary's influence in their condemnation of the "rape" of non-Western cultures, with destruction of values, detribalization, apathy, or conflict resulting. There probably have been some such direct cases in missionary history, but for the most part the missionary's part has been very minor relative to the impact of Western business, politics, and education. There have also been some outstanding cases where the Gospel and resulting culture change have provided an opportunity for the reintegration of a segment of a culture already in rapid change.[2]

Many supporters of Christian missions, on the other hand, have justified their whole program in terms of some overt, symbolic types of culture change. These may be anything from monogamy to haircuts, from attendance at church to the disappearance of scarification, but the missionary sees in them signs that his ministry is taking effect. Missions and missionaries which declare that they are not going out to introduce Western culture, but only to preach the Gospel, are no different in this respect from those with whom they contrast themselves. It is usually institutionalism (hospitalization, education, agricultural mission, etc.) which they

are rejecting by such statements, not really their roles as agents of Westernization. They, too, are thrilled when Ay Blah learns to bathe with Ivory soap, brush his teeth with Ipana, and cut his hair in "civilized" fashion. And if Ta Plooy does not give up his second and third wives or contribute to the church treasury, this is a matter for deep concern, for Ta Plooy obviously is not following the "Gospel teaching" which he has been getting.

The Problem

To many a perceptive missionary, sensitive to cultural values, there has been a very real problem, a dilemma, at this point. On the one hand, there is a realization that cultural forms are relative, that the meanings of different kinds of behavior change in time and from society to society, that the Greek Christians were not bound by Jewish ceremonial law, that God did accept as perfectly normal the plural marriages of the patriarchs, that to have uncovered breasts is not immodesty in the tribe-inhabited hills of Southeast Asia, and many other parts of the world. On the other hand, there is the clear Biblical record that God, through the prophets and the apostles, condemned sin in terms of overt cultural behavior, like that of David arranging for the death of Uriah so that he could marry Bathsheba,[3] or like women talking in church,[4] or like Onan refusing to have sexual intercourse with his dead brother's wife because "the offspring would not be his" (so that God slew him),[5] or like braided hair.[6]

Clearly the preaching of the Gospel in New Testament times did "turn the world upside down," and that at least partly in terms of vast changes in cultural behavior. Culture change has resulted historically from any widespread acceptance of Christ. But what should that change be? Should monogamy result? Should agricultural methods be changed? Should people put on clothes? Should drinking stop? Should romantic love be substituted for family alliances as a basis for marriage?

Should the bride-price be dropped? Should all Christians learn to read? Should churches be built? Should Christians kneel to pray if crouching is their position of reverence and respect? How do we know what culture change is for the best, and what is not?

And how do we induce it? If we feel that reading the Scriptures is necessary for Christian life, do we force Christians to learn to read in order to gain church membership? Such a course of action seems theologically untenable, as well as culturally "loaded" in giving an entirely distorted picture of the meaning of the church, but it has been done, and has been considered essential in some areas. Do we set rules of behavior to which Christians have to conform if they are to remain in good standing? If so, how do we decide what the rules are to be? Are these rules to be imported wholesale from the rules which the missionary observes? If so, which missionary? Are they to be imported wholesale from the Bible? If so, will they include levirate? polygyny? washing of feet? reclining at meals? silence in the churches? How will the choice be made?

The Motivation for Culture Change

Kietzman has rightly emphasized the point that "change is almost always initiated by someone within the cultural community. Even though the idea may have been sparked by contact with another culture, it still must be introduced from within to be accepted."[7] Culture change comes only as an expression of a need felt by individuals within a society. People do not change their behavior unless they feel a need to do so. The need may be trivial, as that for some new excitement or amusement, or it may be profound, as for security in a disintegrating world. Usually it is relatively unconscious. People have not analyzed it or given it a name, but it motivates behavior. Something which no missionary who sees culture change going on around him should ever forget, however, is that the need being satisfied by a change very likely is not the need which the missionary sees.

Among some of the tribal peoples of Laos and Vietnam, for example, the missionary sees a need for clothing. Many missionaries would feel that people need clothing for reasons of modesty (as in cases where women habitually wear nothing above the waist) or for warmth in the chilly season of the year. The second need is one which is felt by the people themselves to some degree, but it is strongly overshadowed by the other needs which they feel and which will be discussed in a moment. The need for modesty in the use of additional clothing is not felt at all, because people consider themselves adequately dressed from that point of view.

When the missionary barrel arrives and the clothes are given out, or when the missionary gives away an old shirt, or when some individual buys a new piece of clothing, what are the needs which he is meeting? One is the need to look respectable in the sight of outsiders--the need for being accepted by people who have prestige. This is why women will often not wear blouses in the village, but will wear them into town or put them on when the missionary shows up. Another is the desire to look well among one's equals, to wear something difficult to obtain, something impossible for one's neighbors to buy. Again, clothing may be a symbol of acceptance by the missionary, of status and prestige in relation to him.

I had a splendid opportunity to observe a preacher from one of the tribes of Southeast Asia after he had been given a topcoat out of the missionary barrel. This was the only topcoat in the lot, and he was the only tribesman who possessed a topcoat. It never got so cold in the area that a missionary ever wore a topcoat, although a woolen suit was confortable in the evening for two or three months of the year. I was along on a trip which we made over rather rugged, mountainous jungle. I in T-shirt and cotton trousers was perspiring profusely because of the heat. Our friend with the topcoat was, of course, wearing it. How else would people see him with a topcoat on unless he wore it?

Then there was the woman who wore nothing above the waist but a substantial pink bra...

A man who starts to wash his clothes after his conversion is probably not doing so because of his love for Christ, even though this seems to the missionary to be vindication of the view that cleanliness is next to godliness. What are the needs being expressed in a change from polygyny to monogamy, in church attendance, in church government, in learning to read, in sending children to school? I would be the last to say that the need of man for God is never involved in some of these, in some places, but even then, as in all human situations, motives are mixed.

Clearly, the typical missionary reaction to culture change is to approve of that which makes other peoples more like themselves in form, in the outward aspects of behavior, whether the meaning of the behavior is the same or not. It is quite possible to give encouragement to the development of a form which is expressing a meaning, fulfilling a need which the missionary would seriously deplore.

The Role of the Church in Culture Change

It seems to me that the real agent of the Holy Spirit in any society for the changes in the culture of that society is the church, the body of believers (not necessarily the organized church of any particular denomination). The church is the salt working through the whole dish. It is that part of the society which has a new relationship to God--yet it reacts in terms of the attitudes and presuppositions of that society. It understands, in an intuitive, unanalyzed way, motives and meanings as the missionary cannot. It is the group which must live out the life of Christ. It must make the decisions. How it makes the decisions is again a matter for the individual culture, and some of the implications of the indigenous church will be discussed in a subsequent article.

The Missionary's Part

What, then, can the missionary do about culture change? Is he to be only an evangelist preaching a non-cultural gospel without making value judgments? This is an impossibility, even if it were desirable. There cannot be preaching except in cultural terms, and no human being can, or should try to escape value judgments.[8] I believe that the missionary cannot legitimately force or enforce any culture change. I believe, furthermore, that he does not have an adequate basis for advocating specific changes in a culture unless he has a profound knowledge of the culture.

I do, however, feel that the missionary has an extremely important function in the tactful, thoughtful, serious presentation of alternate forms of cultural behavior to the Christians in a society. On the basis of his knowledge of history, his understanding of the church elsewhere, and above all, his knowledge of the tremendously varied ways in which God dealt with men, as recorded in the Scriptures, he can make it clear to them that there are alternative ways of behavior to their own, and help them in prayer and study and experiment to select those cultural forms which would be the best expression of their relationship to God in their culture.

The missionary's role in culture change, then, as I see it, is that of a catalyst and of a source of new ideas, new information. It is the voice of experience, but an experience based on his own culture for the most part. Part of the value of anthropological study, of course, is that it gives at least vicarious experience in more than one cultural setting, for by study in this field the missionary can gain awareness of the much wider choice of alternatives than his own culture allows. It is the church which is the legitimate agency in which the missionary should work. It is the people who must make the decisions because of the new needs which they sense and the old needs reinterpreted in the light of their relationship to God and to their fellow men in Christ Jesus

Footnotes

1. The problems of the communication of the Gospel in the matrix of other cultures than our own is (directly or indirectly) a concern of many of the articles in Practical Anthropology. See especially the excellent little article by Dale W. Kietzman, "The Missionary's Role in Culture Change," in Vol. 1, No. 5 (May-June 1954). A book-length discussion of the problem will be found in Eugene A. Nida's Customs and Cultures (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954). The present article is preliminary to some remarks on the cultural implications in the concept of an indigenous church which will appear in a forthcoming issue of Practical Anthropology.

2. For a case study of a problem such as this see G. Linwood Barney, "The Meo--An Incipient Church," Practical Anthropology, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Mar.-Apr. 1957) pp. 31-50.

3. 2 Samuel 11:2-12:23.

4. 1 Corinthians 14:34.

5. Genesis 38:7-10.

6. 1 Timothy 2:9.

7. op. cit., p. 74.

8. By this statement I am not, of course, condoning the highly ethnocentric preaching and value judgments many missionaries make, nor the mistaken views of culture on which they may be based.

CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURES

The Missionary and the Evaluation of Culture

Few problems facing the missionary are more subtle than those involved in the evaluation of cultural practices. Some missionaries, however, do not take more than a moment's reflection to pigeonhole as good, bad, or indifferent the customs of a group of people. The criterion for this judgment is usually the missionary's own ideal background (often not his real background). Customs and practices are normally labeled as good if they are agreeable to the "ideal" of Christian living as he understands it. This ideal is, of course, one which is of necessity limited by its own cultural and historical frontiers. In this orientation the good should be cultivated and developed. The bad must be snipped off like a thorny bush, and what is left passes without scrutiny as innocuous.

This threefold categorization of the aspects of a culture contains within itself certain assumptions which lead to unproductive action. It is often assumed that one can encourage the good to grow and thwart the bad. While this may be very true and is basically what all men do who strive for the good in life, it leads one to conceive of a cultural complex as a series of separate plants, each growing independently from its own roots. In reality, any way of life is based on a series of assumptions which are in some way interrelated so that they reinforce each other and cannot be dealt with as isolated phenomena. This does not mean that all are of equal value as seen by the individuals in the society, but they are interacting.

A further misconception which arises from this three-sided evaluation of a culture is that the category of the indifferent is somehow assumed to be static, while the good and the bad are treated as though they were dynamic. However, while one is encouraging the good and deploring the bad, the indifferent cannot so

remain. This is so again because of the dynamic and changing nature of culture, which reacts to stimulus more like an organism than like independent cells.

The Interrelatedness of Behavior

An intelligible view of culture is one which embraces the interrelatedness of the aspects of a way of life within its evaluation. We may illustrate this briefly from the problem of polygyny. Polygyny in modern Africa has many facets which often compel the missionary to evaluate it with the judgment of bad, due to the economic self-interests which are displayed. (That these are as bad as American competitive self-interests within our modern industrial economic framework is hardly demonstrable.) However, if one wishes to acknowledge the good found in responsibility and devotion to others, this attribute will also be found within the levirate form of polygyny in which a man takes upon himself the familial care and obligation to deceased relatives with a fraternal devotion reflecting a high sense of responsibility. The "good" and the "bad" in this case are so interlocked as to defy separation.

This discouragement of polygyny as bad does not by any means imply that when polygyny is given up the deep sense of responsibility often found in it will come forth as a distilled bit of residue. This was demonstrated to me rather forcibly recently when I asked a group of Kaka Christian adults what they would do if their older non-Christian brothers were to die and leave them their wives. Their replies, without exception, shook off the very thought of responsibility. "We would sell the women and get the money for ourselves." This they would have the right to do within the culture they claim when it will bring them acceptable rewards. The moral responsibility partially required by the polygynous inheritance is refused for quick personal gain.

Reinterpretation of Behavior

In addition to the fact of the enmeshing of the aspects of a way of life, there is always the possibility of reinterpreting a form of behavior to answer some new need. When Pentecostal Christianity came to the Toba Indians of the isolated Argentine Chaco, it brought about a popularization of religion. Before this time only the shaman was a spiritual man. When the tribe as a whole became spiritual, they reacted to it in much the same fashion as the individual shaman had formerly. Jumping and dancing became the vehicle of religious expression. This behaviorism which was the symbol of spirit contact used formerly by the shaman has now become fully sanctioned as evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a tribe where the shaman no longer functions.

Some of the most complex issues facing Christian missions arise out of the reinterpretation and change which develops often within the category of the "indifferent." I shall attempt to demonstrate briefly how the dowry in the Cameroun has passed from the stage of indifference to a front-rank social problem as seen by nationals, administration, and missions.

The changes which have come about in the South Cameroun to reinterpret the meaning of bride wealth or dowry have not been concerned with the dowry itself, but with other social, religious, economic, and political aspects of life. The dowry, because of its integral relation to these, has been vastly affected and has in chainlike fashion produced sharp repercussions in these spheres of life.

Traditional Function of the Dowry

Formerly (and to a certain extent in the villages today) the dowry was an arrangement between two clans in which a marriage union was held such that the groom's clan legalized their claim to the future offspring

through payment in goods and animals to the clan of the bride. The extended families involved in the exchange were primarily affected, but decisions as important as bride wealth were the business of the clan elders. Among the Kaka, metal implements were exchanged in bride wealth, and each clan carefully manipulated marriages to gain for itself the desired offspring and a large stock of metal hoes, tools, spearheads, anvils, rings, etc. The word soumba in Kaka means 'iron', 'wealth', and 'bride price'. It is true to a certain extent that the interclan marriage arrangement through the dowry made divorce difficult, as the desertion of the wife from her dowry-paying husband required the refund of the dowry. That this guaranteed a happy marital status is hardly the case. However, a bride was reluctant to disobey her husband due to her respect for his dowry claim. In earlier times, the price of the dowry was not exorbitant, as exchanges were determined by the whole history of give and take between the clans and families involved rather than being set by an abstract monetary value.

As European settlers and merchants entered seeking gold and rubber, the Africans were induced to exchange their products for money which could only be used in turn to buy goods from the Europeans. Consequently, the Europeans got their gold and rubber and then through commerce got their money back. The advent of a money-based system made the deepest inroad on the dowry, as the African's primary use for wealth was oriented around soumba, bride price. As money became more available, and especially as the desire for acceptance from the Europeans grew among the Africans, the role of bride wealth began to be utilized to realize these new ends.

Dowry Commercialized

The rise of cities and commercial centers, and the introduction of cash crops, brought about a breakdown in the close clan regulation of marriage and the increased desire for European goods. Laws and regulations required that a marriage was not sanctioned by the government un-

less the civil marriage was recorded. Individual families in the cities had little desire or practical need to regulate interclan marriages, as the clan was breaking up. The life in the city produced a new kind of young person who was no longer under the daily scrutiny of village fathers. The moral taboos which guarded and protected one from adventure were no longer to be found in the city. The emergence of self-awareness and the means of accomplishing self-appointed ends brought a revolt among many young people who had to make decisions for themselves. However, the high cost of city living and the constant indebtedness of a family father caused him to see bride wealth as a source of money which would make city life a little better, at least for himself. Consequently, the bride wealth arranged between a man and his future son-in-law often became a financial intrigue in which the girl went to the highest bidder. These prices in Yaoundé today often reach well above $500 U.S. plus such articles as a sewing machine, phonograph, bicycle, or even an automobile.

Such incredible bride prices have had far-flung social repercussions. In the first place, a young man earning $35 to $50 a month finds it nearly impossible to get married. Young women in the cities who have tasted of the material rewards of European life do not care to see themselves sold to the highest bidder, which is often done with little recognition of the girl's choice. Consequently, many girls prefer to go into prostitution where they will at least get the money for themselves. The young men who cannot afford to pay exorbitant dowries are their primary customers. Consequently, here is a case in which in the cities at least prostitution becomes a form of biological marriage forced upon these young people through the reinterpretation of the traditional dowry which formerly was intended for quite opposite ends.

The government requires the civil marriage certificate in order to apply for the benefits from the workmen's compensation fund. Since the civil marriage cer-

tificate is not given by the government until evidence of dowry payment, it means that there are numerous young people who are always "only half married." The churches require the possession of the civil marriage certificate prior to the religious marriage. In the port city of Douala recent statistics have been released which show that in 1937 out of 89,356 Roman Catholics there were a total of 1,510 religious marriages. In 1957 the number of communicants rose to 178,000 with a decline in religious marriages to 1,070 for that year. Similar statistics for Protestant communities are not immediately available, but one can be sure that the trend here is indicative of the present influence exerted by the dowry.

The Necessity of Value Judgments

Everyone does and should make value judgments. It would be impossible to decide which trousers a man would put on in the morning if he did not make such judgments. The missionary should not be frightened into an impasse because he is convinced of a certain relative nature of value judgments. I have come to feel that much missionare inaction is the result of the category of the indifferent. Judgments of the good and the bad are often too facile, and what is not immediately self-evident is dropped into this class of the indifferent. Rather than avoiding judgments, the missionary should, on the contrary, make thoroughgoing evaluations of every aspect of culture and not allow the innocuous catchall of indifference to rob him of understanding culture.

It is not necessary nor advisable to approach the evaluation of items of a culture with the categories of only good, bad, and indifferent. These evaluations must be conditioned by the concepts of relatedness and change. There are three questions with which one may approach evaluation:

1. We need to ask how the people perform such judgments themselves and how they scale their own hierarchy of values?

2. What are the kinds of innovations at work both within the society as well as without which are or will tend toward change of the present conditions?

3. How are such changes working toward or away from generalized Christian moral and spiritual values?

If we make value judgments within this framework, we are less apt to create a static sphere of disinterest and lack of concern. This does not necessarily mean that we can thereby guarantee the development of the good at the expense of the bad. However, we should be in a position to make the values of Christian living more relevant to the changing scene taking place in our areas of work.

W.D.R.

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

Should the Missionary Observe Local Taboos?

We were really interested in the article by Bill Reyburn in the Jan.-Feb. issue of PA,[1] and would like to ask how far you think a missionary should go in keeping the taboos of the people. Aren't these taboos all interwoven with the religion? Or don't they consider it as such? We would like to know your opinion on this.

Beulah and Richard Johnston

Certainly not all taboos have a direct religious basis. In our own culture we have taboos on eating dog, cat, and horse meat. A person who does is something less than human, but there is no religious association with the taboo. Other taboos do have religious associations without being directly caused by religion. An example among some American Christians (but not among many others, and certainly not among most European Christians) is wine-drinking, or smoking, for that matter. Some, though not really part of religion, are simply part of the code of good taste surrounding it, as defined in a culture. Silence or reverence in church (refraining from fidgeting or talking) may have nothing to do with my Christianity, which I define in terms of my relationship to God through Jesus Christ, but I react to such behavior as being irreverent just the same.

Other taboos have, at least partially, a direct religious basis. (Whether this taboo is absolute, coming directly from God for all men everywhere, or whether it is related to the local culture and experience is a problem we will leave aside for now, but we can think of taboos which are just about universal to Christendom as we know it.) Such are extramarital sexual intercourse, murder, theft, etc., defined differently in different places. Such taboos have a very strong socio-cultural basis as well as a religious one. (And by that I do not mean to separate religion and socio-cultural phenomena.)

Now it is very true that in most other societies than our own the religious aspect of the culture is much more closely intertwined with the other aspect than in ours. We have a highly secular society. But the converse is also true. In nonsecular societies, even more than in ours, nonreligion is closely intertwined with religion. A religious taboo is also a social taboo.

So much for your question about the religious basis of taboos. The other part is harder. "How far should a missionary go in keeping taboos?" I do not think there is any simple answer. Certainly, simple common courtesy and a respect for people as human beings with feelings would impel him to observe many. If I have forced myself on a community by moving in, or even visiting, I should respect those people and their feelings as much as I can. Reyburn's "participation" in the Bulu village would have been a mockery if he had not done so.

But, so far as I can see, the only way to answer the question is to go behind it to a more fundamental issue. Is it our mission to destroy taboos, or even judge them? If a man with a pregnant wife cannot touch an elephant, does that have anything to do with his relation to God? Or, why should not a Christian menstruating woman go into seclusion, or a member of a Gazelle clan refrain from eating gazelle?

Of course, as an understanding of God comes to men, everywhere there is a change of values, and many things which were important become irrelevant. The functional value of the taboo in society may be gone as the old religion is gone, and the taboo may disappear. But why should a young American girl who does not really believe in ghosts force herself to go into a cemetery at night if she is afraid anyhow?

Many missionaries are afraid that by keeping taboos they are reinforcing the non-Christian religion or even "superstition." Occasionally that could be true, but I think that danger is overexaggerated, too. There are

tactful ways of showing people alternative behavior without flouting their sensibilities.

There is, however, another side of the question, and that is that local people know you are different from them and expect you to be. But you have to be close enough to them to learn when that difference is simply an amusing "foreignness" and when it is a terribly disturbing violation of their values--or even an annoying, irritating nuisance. "Keeping the taboos" may be just another form of "slumming," of paternalizing. Or, it may be another avenue to fellowship and mutual appreciation, where cultural differences are relegated to a level of lesser importance and warm human fellowship may in time become Christian fellowship, and where the Gospel does not come in the exclusive context of "thou shalt not," but in the embracing context that God is seeking (through the missionary) to draw men to Himself in love.

W.A.S.

Footnote

1. Reyburn, William D.: "Life in an African Village," Practical Anthropology, Vol. 4, No. 1, (Jan.-Feb., 1957), pp. 10-12.

NOTES AND NEWS

Institute of Missions Inaugurated

The first session of the Summer Institute of Missions, sponsored by the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association and the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association on the campus of Wheaton College, was completed on July 19th. Giving either graduate or undergraduate credit to missionaries and candidates, the Institute consisted of four courses conducted within the academic framework of the regular Wheaton Summer School.

The anthropology course (one of the four offered at the Institute) was built around the theme of effective communication.[1] A combination of text materials introduced the missionaries and candidates to the normal academic scope of the field,[2] to the orientation of anthropology to missionary problems and attitudes,[3] and to a consideration of specific cases and field problems.[4]

Besides the over-all stress on communication, two other items of emphasis were attitudes (considerations of racial equality and a recognition of cultural relativism consistent with Christian absolutes) and understanding (discovery of the interrelated functioning of native customs and the meaning and values of the native culture, so that the missionary's presentation of Christianity can and must be adapted to the receivers' culture in order to achieve a responsible indigenous church). This adaptation only happens as the missionary achieves an understanding of the native culture which is more than a mere knowledge of their customs.

It was also pointed out that, no matter how well trained we are, anthropologically or otherwise, our preparation does not guarantee our success in the missionary enterprise. As dependent upon human communicative skills as most cross-cultural dealings are, "the communication of the Gospel...is neither primarily nor ultimately dependent on our human ability to communi-

cate. ...the primary author of the effective transmission of the message is the Holy Spirit. This demonstrates clearly that communication of the Gospel has a quality of its own..."[5]

At a session such as the Missions Institute there is an interesting twofold confirmation of impressions from missionary literature as to why missionaries have so often disregarded or rejected the value of anthropology. One point of view is that there is nothing in native culture worth preserving. It's all "heathen." The other view is, with reference to the first, that nobody is so stupid as to think that; "everybody knows one must take the native culture into account." Neither one understands the native culture, and for both anthropology is superfluous. Needless to say, attitudes such as these were modified as much because of the rich discussions between missionaries from different fields as because of classroom instruction and reading.

One of the rewarding experiences from such a class is to see the plans for direct application of what is being studied to the actual field situation. In this case, before the four-week session was even completed, one missionary in the anthropology class had composed a lengthy letter to her colleagues on the field urging consideration of an attempt to understand the natives and their culture instead of seeing how fast they could win them away from it. She brought the impact of this approach directly to bear upon her own field by outlining detailed, concrete proposals as to how the mission church (whose native pastor preaches only in English at present) could help to further effective communication of the Gospel to the bulk of the tribe.

Footnotes

1. A course outline and bibliography will be mailed to anyone interested upon receipt of a self-addressed envelope with 6¢ postage. Write to: Dept. of Anthropology, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.

2. Herskovits, M. J.: Cultural Anthropology. Knopf, New York, 1955.

3. Nida, E. A.: Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions. Harper, New York, 1954.

Davis, J. M.: New Buildings on Old Foundations. Friendship Press, New York, 1945.

4. Reyburn, William D.. The Toba Indians of Argentine Chaco: An Interpretive Report. Mennonite Board of Missions, 1954.

Selected articles from the International Review of Missions and other journals.

5. Kraemer, Hendrik: The Communication of the Christian Faith. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1956. p. 28.

J.O.B., IIII

INDEX FOR VOLUME IV

African Political Systems and African Church Polity, by Mahlon M. Hess, 5:170

Anthropology in Administration, by Homer G. Barnett, reviewed by Sol Tax, 4:158

Appreciation, (Letter), by Leon Gillaspie, 3:111

Appreciation, (Letter), by Robert Blaschke, 3:111

Aschmann, Elizabeth D., A Protest About Piltdown, (Letter), 1:26; (Practical Problems): How Do I Go About Anthropological Study,, 1:13; When You Begin Asking Questions..., 1:17

Barnett, Homer G., Anthropology in Administration, reviewed by Sol Tax, 4:158

Barney, G. Linwood, The Meo--An Incipient Church, 2:31

Beaver, Raymond W., Addison S. Truxton, Survey of Pwo Karen Dialects in North Thailand, 1:1

Beekman, John, A Culturally Relevant Witness, 3:83

Blaschke, Robert, Appreciation, (Letter), 3:111

Book Reviews, (Letter), by Duane Engholm, 1:26

Bromley, H. Myron, Christmas Meditation, (Editorial), 6:208

Buckwalter, Albert, A Toba Analogy, 3:92

Buker, Ray, Sr., You Are Different, 3:99
Buswell, James O., III, Institute of Missions Inaugurated, 6:248; Questions to Investigate, 3:95; Rejoinder on Piltdown, (Letter), 1:27; reviews: Man, Culture, and Society, by Harry L. Shapiro, 3:109; Health, Culture, and Community, by Benjamin D. Paul, 3:108; "Is the Missionary Done For?", by Delia and Ferdinand Kuhn, 1:24
Christian Education and Christian Preaching, (Editorial), by William A. Smalley, 5:200
Christmas Meditation, (Editorial), by H. Myron Bromley, 6:208
Conflicts and Contradictions in African Christianity, by William D. Reyburn, 5:161
Culturally Relevant Witness, A, by John Beekman, 3:83
Dictionary of Anthropology, by Charles Winick, reviewed by Benton J. Melbourne, 1:21
Engholm, Duane, Book Reviews, (Letter), 1:26
Feaver, Douglas, Taste in Christian Music, 2:51
Footnotes to Earlier Issues, (Letter), by George Spee, 3:111
Fredrickson, Dean, The Problem of Formalism and Missions, 6:220
Future of Practical Anthropology, The, (Editorial), by William A. Smalley, 1:18
Gillaspie, Leon, Appreciation, (Letter), 3:111
Greig, Herbert W., If Only..., (Letter), 5:203
Grimes, Joseph, Is Giving an Equalization Process?, 3:97
Hart, Ray, Reaction from Peru, (Letter), 4:160
Health, Culture, and Community, by Benjamin D. Paul, reviewed by James O. Buswell, III, 3:108
Hess, Mahlon M., African Political Systems and African Church Polity, 5:170
Hill Peoples of Kentung State, The, by Elaine T. Lewis, 6:224
How Do I Adjust to Giving?, (Practical Problems), 3:89; Reply I: A Toba Analogy, by Albert Buckwalter, 3:92; Reply II: Questions to Investigate, by James O. Buswell, III, 3:95; Reply III: Is Giving an Equalization Process?, by Joseph Grimes, 3:97; Reply IV: You Are Different, by Ray Buker, Sr., 3:99

How Do I Go About Anthropological Study?, (Practical Problems), by Elizabeth D. Aschmann, 1:13; Reply: Learning to Ask the Right Questions, by William A. Smalley, 1:15
If Only..., (Letter), by Herbert W. Greig, 5:203
Increase in Subscription Rates, (Editorial), by William A. Smalley, 5:202
Innovations in Practical Anthropology, (Editorial), by William A. Smalley, 4:157
Institute of Missions Inaugurated, by James O. Buswell, III, 6:248
Is Giving an Equalization Process?, by Joseph Grimes, 3:97
"Is the Missionary Done For?", by Delia and Ferdinand Kuhn, reviewed by James O. Buswell, III, 1:24
Johnston, Beulah and Richard, Should the Missionary Observe Local Taboos?, (Practical Problems), 6:245
Kuhn, Delia and Ferdinand, "Is the Missionary Done For?", reviewed by James O. Buswell, III, 1:24
Larson, Mrs. Gordon, The Reason Has Not Been Determined, (Practical Problems), 5:195
Learning to Ask the Right Questions, by William A. Smalley, 1:15
Lewis, Elaine T., The Hill Peoples of Kentung State, 6:224
Life in an African Village, by William D. Reyburn, 1:10
Loptson, Gordon P., We Are Pleased, (Letter), 5:203
Man, Culture, and Society, by Harry L. Shapiro, reviewed by James O. Buswell, III, 3:109
Mariology in Latin America, by Eugene A. Nida, 3:69
Melbourne, Benton J., reviews of Dictionary of Anthropology, by Charles Winick, 1:21; The Missionary and the Cultures of Man, 1:22
Meo--An Incipient Church, The, by G. Linwood Barney, 2:31
Missionary and Culture Change, The, by William A. Smalley, 6:231
Missionary and the Cultures of Man, The, reviewed by Benton J. Melbourne, 1:22
Missionary and the Evaluation of Culture, The, by William D. Reyburn, 6:238
Missions, Male and Female, by William D. Reyburn, 4:140

Muir, James, Some Suggestions, (Letter), 5:205
Nature of Christian Giving, by William D. Reyburn, 4:147
New Subscribers, 2:68; 3:113
Nida, Eugene A., Religion and Anthropology, (Editorial), 2:63; Working Out a Cooperative Answer, 2:59; Mariology in Latin America, 3:69; The Role of Language in Contemporary Africa, 4:122; The Roman Catholic, Communist, and Protestant Approach to Social Structure, 6:209
Paul, Benjamin D., Health, Culture, and Community, reviewed by James O. Buswell, III, 3:108
Problem of Formalism and Missions, The, by Dean Fredrickson, 6:220
Protest About Piltdown, A, (Letter), by Elizabeth D. Aschmann, 1:26
Proximity or Neighborliness?, (Editorial), by William A. Smalley, 3:101
Purnell, Herbert C., Jr., Thai Response to the Gospel, 4:115
Questions to Investigate, by James O. Buswell, III, 3:95
Reach: Christianity in Cultures, by William D. Reyburn, 4:138; 5:185; 6:238
Reaction from Peru, (Letter), by Ray Hart, 4:160
Reason Has Not Been Determined, The, (Practical Problems), by Mrs. Gordon Larson, 5:195; reply by William A. Smalley
Rejoinder on Piltdown, (Letter), by James O. Buswell, III, 1:27
Religion and Anthropology, (Editorial), by Eugene A. Nida, 2:63
Reyburn, William D., Life in an African Village, 1:10; Reach: Christianity in Cultures, 4:138; Missions, Male and Female, 4:140; The Nature of Christian Giving, 4:147; Conflicts and Contradictions in African Christianity, 5:161; The Transformation of God and the Conversion of Man, 5:185; The Missionary and the Evaluation of Culture, 6:238
Role of Language in Contemporary Africa, The, by Eugene A. Nida, 4:122
Roman Catholic, Communist, and Protestant Approach to Social Structure, The, by Eugene A. Nida, 6:209

Shapiro, Harry L., Man, Culture, and Society, reviewed by James O. Buswell, III, 3:109
Should the Missionary Observe Local Taboos?, (Practical Problems), by Beulah and Richard Johnston, 6:245; reply by William A. Smalley
Should We Attend Indian Ceremonials?, (Practical Problems), 2:58; Reply: Working Out a Cooperative Answer, by Eugene A. Nida, 2:59
Smalley, William A., The Missionary and Culture Change, 6:231; Editorials: The Future of Practical Anthropology, 1:18; Proximity or Neighborliness?, 3:101; Innovations in Practical Anthropology, 4:157; Christian Education and Christian Preaching, 5:200; Increase in Subscription Rates, 5:202; Practical Problems: Learning to Ask the Right Questions, 1:15; Reply to Practical Problems, 5:195; 6:245
Some Suggestions, (Letter), by James Muir, 5:205
Some Suggestions, (Letter), by Richard Turner, 5:204
Spee, George, Footnotes to Earlier Issues, (Letter), 3:111
Survey of Pwo Karen Dialects in North Thailand, by Raymond W. Beaver and Addison S. Truxton, 1:1
Taste in Christian Music, by Douglas Feaver, 2:51
Tax, Sol, review of Anthropology in Administration, by Homer G. Barnett, 4:158
Thai Response to the Gospel, by Herbert C. Purnell, Jr., 4:115
Toba Analogy, A, by Albert Buckwalter, 3:92
Transformation of God and the Conversion of Man, The, by William D. Reyburn, 5:185
Truxton, Addison S., Raymond W. Beaver, Survey of Pwo Karen Dialects in North Thailand, 1:1
Turner, Richard, Some Suggestions, (Letter), 5:204
We Are Pleased, (Letter), by Gordon P. Loptson, 5:203
When You Begin Asking Questions..., (Practical Problems), by Elizabeth D. Aschmann, 1:17
Winick, Charles, Dictionary of Anthropology, reviewed by Benton J. Melbourne, 1:21
Working Out a Cooperative Answer, by Eugene A. Nida, 2:59
You Are Different, by Ray Buker, Sr., 3:99

THE PURPOSE OF PRACTICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Practical Anthropology brings together in a non-technical but creative way the resources of Christians oriented in a cross-cultural view of man and society. It is devoted to the development of a more effective world-wide Christianity by the investigation, interpretation, and dissemination of the practical implications of anthropology and other culturally oriented studies. It studies the function of Christianity in a cross-cultural sense.

Practical Anthropology is designed, for example, to be of benefit to missionaries and to students preparing for missions, in that it discusses the problems related to an effective communication of the Gospel across cultural barriers, and to the establishment of a church everywhere rooted in the culture of its people, but everywhere transforming that culture. In it the forms and practices of Western Christianity are also discussed cross-culturally and in the light of cultural dynamics. It provides a clearinghouse for the sharing of views among students of anthropology and related sciences who are concerned with anthropology and Christianity, and simultaneously a means by which they may convey relevant information and ideas to others. It serves as a medium for the orientation of thinking Christians toward a cross-cultural view, toward an understanding of culture which is not bound to the narrow experience of the West, but which is molded by a respectful recognition of the way of life of people everywhere.

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